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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1112
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1832
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 7997
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 5769
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 8947
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 6948
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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SUBJECT: LIANCOURT ROCKS: JAPAN OFFERS SECRET PROPOSAL TO THE ROK.

REF: A. TOKYO 02072

[1](#)B. SEOUL 01246

[1](#)C. USDAO TOKYO IIR 6 852 0111 06

[1](#)D. 6 852 0113 06

[1](#)E. 6 852 0114 06

[1](#)F. 6 852 0115 06

[1](#)G. 6 852 0116 06

Classified By: AMBASSADOR J. THOMAS SCHIEFFER. REASONS 1.4 (b),(d).

[1](#)1. (S) MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Deputy Director General Kunio Umeda informed Political Minister Counselor Meserve on April 18 that Vice Foreign Minister Yachi had put forth a "secret proposal" to Ra Jong-il, South Korea's Ambassador to Japan. Under that proposal, the Japanese government would halt plans to conduct a bathymetric survey of the seabed adjacent to the Liancourt Rocks (Takeshima/Tokdo islands), and within the overlapping area claimed by both countries as a part of their EEZs, if the Republic of Korea agrees to shelve the naming proposal it reportedly intends to table at the June 14-23 meeting of the 19th Subcommittee on Undersea Features Naming (SCUFN). The proposal also asks the ROK to work with Japan to establish some kind of mutually agreed upon notification and procedural process for handling this problem in the future, Umeda added. He said there has not yet been a response from the ROK government and that the Foreign Ministry is currently awaiting Seoul's reply. DDG Umeda cautioned that knowledge of this proposal is very limited within the Japanese government and requested the U.S. Government handle this information carefully. (Septel reports the Ambassador's meeting with ROK Ambassador Ra).

[1](#)2. (C) If the ROK government accepts the proposal, the Foreign Ministry will "try to persuade the Kantei not to send the research vessels into that area," Umeda continued, expressing confidence that under those circumstances MOFA's recommendation would prevail. However, if the ROK does not accept the proposal, two Japan Coast Guard vessels will begin carrying out their survey of the disputed seabed on April 20, he said, adding that this initial survey will go on for approximately five days. DDG Umeda further stated that the South Korean government has not been informed of this plan, but was merely notified on April 14 (under relevant

provisions of the Safety of Lives at Sea convention) of Japan's intent to survey the area sometime between April 14 and June 30.

13. (C) Japan has no intention of engaging in any physical confrontation, Umeda assured. "Even if the ROK ships are waiting for us, we will do our best to avoid them," he said. Umeda confided that Prime Minister Koizumi and "especially Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe" are monitoring the situation very closely. Umeda also stressed that while he is "personally very anxious" and tensions are running high over the issue in both Tokyo and Seoul, it was also true that Japanese and South Korean officials were talking with one another, and working together to resolve this current disagreement.

SCHIEFFER